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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001923

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PNAT](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS MINISTER DISCUSSES TRAFFICKING,
PRISON ABUSE, AND HADITHA

REF: A. STATE 85549

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 01719

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. C) On June 1, PolCouns delivered talking points (ref A) on the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report to Human Rights Minister Wijdan Mikhail Salim. Salim expressed interest in the issue as well as in learning more about the data supporting the assessment on Iraq. PolCouns agreed to assist the Minister and to continue further discussion on this issue.

[1](#)2. (C) The Minister also discussed the May 30 discoveries of abuse in two Ministry of Interior (MOI) Iraqi National Police (INP) detention facilities (SEPTTEL) located at "Site 4" in central Baghdad. Salim told PolCouns that her staff is producing a report condemning the abuses and that she would present the report to the Prime Minister. Salim said that she had seen photos from the site visit and was very disturbed, not only by this incident, but by daily reports of various abuses in Iraq. PolCouns urged Salim to push for the immediate removal of the Site 4 prison directors, quick resolution in relieving overcrowding, and the transferal of juveniles from the facility.

[1](#)3. (C) The Minister also expressed concern about the Haditha incident. Salim told PolCouns that, during the last Council of Ministers meeting May 30, the Prime Minister had raised the issue of Haditha and decided to establish a committee charged with looking at the event. PolCouns assured Salim that the USG takes very seriously the Haditha allegations and indicated that a vigorous investigation was underway. PolCouns promised that anyone found to have committed any crimes would be held accountable.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Though less than two weeks into her position, Salim appears to be significantly more interested in the human rights affairs than her predecessor. Despite not having a background in human rights, the Minister has demonstrated a proactive inclination as well as genuine interest. Her openness to Embassy officials bodes well for a close working relationship during the upcoming years.

KHALILZAD